

HISTORY OF THE BEAVER VALLEY.

Correspondence of the Pittsburgh Gazette. BEAVER VALLEY, April, 1873. [Paper No. 7.] BRIDGEWATER.

The first settlement made in what is now known as Bridgewater, was probably about the beginning of the present century, or perhaps as early as 1798 or 1799. The first settler took up the lands lying on the point, or more properly, triangular flat formed by the confluence of Brady's Run and Beaver River, and running back to the hills north of Beaver. A village was built on this flat, and the name of Sharon given to it, which for a great many years was quite a noted place among travelers who had occasion to visit the valley. What is now the most, thriving and populous part of Bridgewater, was then unknown except as a wilderness, and as being a part of the lands included in the "academy outlots," said out in 1791. It was many years afterward, before Bridgewater was even thought of as a town. The first building put up in Sharon, was in all probability occupied by Mr. Robert Darrah, and used by him as a public house, for the entertainment of travelers who should visit the valley. It was used also probably as the boarding place of the managers of the work being done for Burr's expedition, by Dr. McCaslin and wife and the Constable brothers. But the most conspicuous building and one that seems to have the most interesting history, was that one with the red front and known as "the old red front," which was erected by Messrs. Hoopes, Townsend & Co., in 1803, for the use of Isaac Wilson, who was then a native of Baltimore. The house was built and used for merchandizing, a point where the settlers in the neighborhood went for supplies for their families. The old weather-worn building yet stands as a landmark of primitive times and as a reminder of earlier days. It bears its age well and bravely holds up its head amid the more pretentious improvements of the valley. Its faded red front and old style, the quaint stories told of its early history, and the good old time memories intertwined in its checkered career, make it yet an object of much interest to those who are curious about the reminiscences of early times. What tales are connected with that old "red front!" Of what hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, troubles and disappointments and hardships of frontier life it has been the active scene. It stands, not far from where the intrepid Brady and his three comrades put to death the thirteen Indians, who had burnt the home of a settler; but a short distance from where Brady, single handed, rescued Jennie Stupes and child, from the clutches of a band of Indians; and nearly on the bank of that wild little run, that has passed into history as Brady's Run. To one standing by that old relic, and listening to the sighing of the wind in the trees, as it issues from the mouth of the glen, and the gentle rippling of the waters, courting their way from the hill sides, or in a storm, roaring and dashing like a mountain torrent, there is given a short retrospective vision, in which there rises before the mind, sights and scenes that now fascinate, now curdle the blood, and always must create impressions on the mind, that shall give us a deeper reverence for those daring men and women who have turned the forest into a garden and made it bloom for us.

AARON BURR'S EXPEDITION. A few years after the building of the "old red front," Sharon was for all time given a prominent place in history, as being a place where Aaron Burr had fitted out a part of his expedition for the founding of the empire of which he was to be the head and ruler. The spot is yet distinctly pointed out where the operations for this celebrated expedition was carried on, and the different parts of the work assigned to each is related. The time of this occurrence was in the year 1806, and the place, near where the "old red front" is yet standing. The boat yard was located on the flat which has been already mentioned, and was for a time a place of great industry and activity. The point chosen was an excellent one for the work. While it is contiguous to the Ohio river, it was at that time a retired spot, and well calculated for the plottings of treason. Timber was in abundance, in the whole valley, good saw mills were in operation and experienced workmen were available. It is related, that some of the most favorably known and patriotic citizens of Beaver Valley to-day, are the descendants of men who supplied Burr's agents with goods and wares and the necessary articles for his outfit. In doing what they did, those good fathers had not the remotest thought of "aiding and abetting" a rebellion against their country, but trafficked with the would-be insurgents, as they trafficked daily with their neighbors. Burr sent two men to Sharon as his representatives and business managers of the work done at that place.

Their names were respectively, Tyler and Smith. They had the entire superintendence of everything that was done, from the procuring of the necessary material, for the construction of the boats, the supplies necessary for use in the outfit of the boats; the produce, &c., for use in the trip down the river, and, indeed, all needed articles of materials to make the venture a success, was done under their personal supervision and care. They employed, as the superintendent of the boat building department, a man

by the name of Amasa Brown, who had the sole charge of this work, and under whose direction the entire fleet of boats was built and put in proper order for the descent of the Ohio river. The necessary workmen were employed by Brown, occupying a house adjoining the "old red front." The style of the boat was similar to that of the old time coal boats, except that Burr's boats were closely covered—which used to cover the bottom of the Monongahela river during a rise, and were so extensively and universally used before the advent of barges. Burr's boats were from sixty to seventy feet in length, and were capable of holding a large quantity of such goods as he wished to take along with the expedition. They were generally called the "Orleans boats."

They were of first class material and in every way very well calculated for the subsequent use to which they were put. The lumber used in construction of the boats, together with all necessary articles required for the outfit of the boats, were furnished to Messrs. Tyler & Smith, by Mr. Isaac Wilson from his store, he then occupying the red front as a store room for general traffic. He procured the lumber from the mills then in operation in Fallston and Brighton. The mill in Fallston subsequently became the tub factory, and the mill in Brighton, was once standing on the site of the present noble flouring mill. All the lumber used, first passed through Mr. Wilson's hands, before getting into the possession of Tyler & Smith. The flour was procured by Mr. Wilson, from the mills in the valley, and the meat and the general produce were also the products of the valley. The payments for these articles, were promptly made by the superintendents to Mr. Wilson, by drafts on New York, all of which were in turn honored except the last draft, which was protested, but not until after the expedition had left the waters of the Beaver and had passed some distance down the Ohio. During the progress of the work at Sharon, and the prompt payment of all expenses incurred, the neighborhood was quite prosperous, and no doubt the minds of the people were raised with high expectations, of the great benefits that it would inure to the country by this boat building. A few years later, and boat building was one of the things of the past on the banks of Beaver. During the progress of the work at Sharon, Burr once visited the scene of operations, to inspect the work done and to give directions for future movements. Connected with the fleet, was a gentleman by the name of McCaslin, who was the Physician or Medical Director.

AN ADVENTUROUS WOMAN. During the stay at Sharon, an incident is related of the wife of this gentleman, which is a peculiarly forcible illustration of the adventurous spirit of the times, and of the great changes already witnessed in our valley, from hardships and inconveniences to comparative ease and all needed appliances for comfort and convenience. This lady was then stopping in Buffalo. The Dr. was very desirous that she should join him at Sharon, but was unable to leave his post and go after her. He knew the trip would be of one peculiar difficulty, and attended with great inconvenience and some considerable suffering and hardships. It was finally decided that she should undertake the trip through the wild and almost totally uninhabited country intervening between them, which to say the least of it, was enough to appal the heart of the stoutest of women. As the Dr. could not leave to go after her, it was necessary to procure some one else as an escort. He was not long in choosing a strong, resolute, good fellow from among the party, who agreed to make the trip. After suitable preparations, the escort started on his trip, taking with him one horse and a man's saddle, upon which he safely made his way to Buffalo. Immediately upon his arrival he hunted the lady up, who is described as having been a very highly cultivated and beautiful woman, and as well sensitive and delicate, the last person in the world to choose for such a trip. But the return trip was commenced, the only conveyance in their reach being that which the escort rode from Sharon to Buffalo. The question may have occurred to their minds, as to just how they were to make the trip in such a manner; but if so, history has failed to record it, though it is recorded that they got safely through in some manner with the means in their power. They passed through some very miserable swamps, known as the Cstarangus swamps, on the way and penetrated the Indians reservations. In making such a journey it is fairly probable that they did not find it a source of enjoyment. Several night they were required to camp out, with nothing but the blue canopy of heaven above them for their shelter, and a lap of mother earth for their resting place. Not even a friendly hut opened its rude door for a shelter or retreat.

They suffered together the necessary hardships and vicissitudes of camp life. I wonder how many of the blooming, bright eyed maidens of Bridgewater, would undertake such a trip for any compensation, even to the finding at the end of the cheerless journey, a devoted husband? In its early history, Sharon had the usual "ups and downs" of other villages, and probably saw its most prosperous days in its early existence. After a lapse of time, it was merged into the borough of Bridgewater, with whose history its

subsequent career has been identified. While Bridgewater may not fairly outrank, and with a certain degree of pride "look down upon Sharon of the old red house," let it remember that whatever of character antiquity has given their town, it has come down by regular succession through the history of Sharon. Whatever there is of the stirring scenes of frontier life, they have been mainly centered in Sharon.

"A Touching Instance of Gratitude. We were what is called a comfortable couple—me and my good lady. I have money in the funds, some house property, and a coal agency. A portion of the day I occupy in calling for the rents and in looking out for the postman, who may or may not (probably not, as a rule) bring orders for coal. My good lady sees after the house, when she is not having a nap, or looking out of the window, and blows up the servant girl. We have several meals during the day. We like a little and often, and our servant girls get rather overfed and saucy after a time, if they don't go away. My good lady, in the latter case, is generally very kind to them. Our last girl was taken ill, and we gave her a week's holiday, some soup, wine and oranges, and her wages as usual. This conduct on our part affected our servant girl deeply, and she insisted on sending her sister as a substitute while she was away. Her sister came very early. My good lady got up and let her in. She was curtseying on the doorstep. "If you please, ma'am, I'm Jemima's sister," she said. "Take care," said my good lady; "you've upset the milk-can with your crinoline!" She came in and began to clear away the supper things, and dropped a plate. My good lady told her where to find the breakfast things, and she brought up a cup without a handle; it had slipped through her fingers somehow. My good lady said, "the girl's willing, but she's nervous."

We have some nice china ornaments on the parlor mantelpiece. While we were at breakfast, she dusted off a couple of shepherdesses. Between that and dinner time, though, she only got through a tumbler and an egg cup, and I was beginning to think that she was getting steeper. "My good lady went down stairs to see how dinner was getting on. She came up, looking very vexed indeed. She said: "You know the best soup tureen?" I said, "I do." She said, "It's gone!" "How?" I asked. "To pieces!" She went down after this, and presently I heard a smash. My good lady shortly afterward appeared. She was in tears. She said, "Those two cut decanters!" I said, "This is really becoming serious. Hadn't we better send her about her business?" My good lady replied, "How unreasonably you do talk! Her sister sent her here out of kindness to us. It will hurt her feelings dreadfully if we don't keep her." I said, "How about our feelings?" There was an awful smash down stairs just at this moment. We sat still and waited. Jemima's sister presently made her appearance, weeping bitterly. She said, "Oh! ma'am, oh! sir, I'm the unluckiest girl that ever was. I've fallen down with the dinner tray!" I said, "Will you be kind enough to return home? We're not cross with you, and here's a shilling; only, my good girl, depart while there is yet a whole piece of crockery left in the house." She waved her arms wildly, and knocked a few ornamental things off a sideboard. "How can I ever repay you?" she cried.

I said, "Your presence here, my good girl, is costing us, on an average, about a shilling a minute. If you would only go away and take another situation—say, for instance, in the china shop at the corner of the street—we might, with a few years of penury and privation, gradually recover our losses." She saw it in the same light, and went. My good lady then descended to the kitchen to look after the dinner. Jemima's sister had left a jug on the stairs, over which my good lady tumbled and put her ankle out, also breaking the jug. Jemima's sister has called on us twice since and said how sorry she was. We have on those occasions put the chain up before speaking to her. We think it advisable that she should not come inside the house any more.

- Sixteen Good Habits. 1. Abstinence from tobacco and intoxicants. 2. Temperance at meals. 3. Daily attention to all the condition of health. 4. Constant occupation. 5. Doing at once whatever is required. 6. Having a time and place for everything. 7. Fidelity to all appointments and duties. 8. Paying for everything in advance. 9. Regular pursuit in some science. 10. Giving as well as receiving. 11. Aiming at harmony in conversation. 12. Looking always on the bright side. 13. Association with some favorite minister and society. 14. Talking on edifying subjects. 15. Acting always in the right spirit. 16. Realizing the presence of God at all times.

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Business Directory.

BEAVER. M. & J. LAWRENCE, Physicians & Surgeons. Office that formerly occupied by U. S. Revenue Assessor, Third street, Beaver, Pa. april-15

MILLER, J. W. Physician and Surgeon, office that formerly occupied by Dr. McKinnley and Lawrence, Residence, Dr. McKinnley's house. april-15

DUNLAP, J. F., Attorney at Law. Office in the Court-house, Beaver, Pa. All legal business promptly attended to. april-15

PURVIN, J. H., dealer in Fancy Dry Goods, Choice Groceries, and Notions. (Specially Tea and Sugar) Flour, Feed, and Wood-ware, corner of Third and Buffalo streets, Beaver, Pa. april-15

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SCOTT, S. & CO., dealer in Groceries and Provisions, Third street. april-15

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MOORE, J., dealer in Drugs and Medicines, Third street. april-15

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